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From: Roger R <roger.reavis@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 3:10 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Fletcher, Gordon-Andrew (SMD 5A08)
Subject: Opposition of Case 17963A (SQ3899-Lot0076)

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Due to the timing on 4/12/23, I will be unable to testify regarding this case. Here is my written testimony regarding Case 17963A:

To DC Board of Zoning Adjustment, Office of Planning, and Neighbors of 4975 South Dakota Ave NE,

The current application of the project at 4975 South Dakota Ave NE (Case#17963A) should not be considered. The negative impact for property values, safety, and quality of life of my neighbours is too great. Given that DDOT has done no traffic impact study, environmental study, or approval of this application should be enough reason alone.

As a resident that lives behind the applicant, and was never communicated to by the applicants, I am upset by the thought of another gas station in the community. The current zoning (MU-3) description includes language that the zoned lot needs to serve the daily needs of the community. Another gas station would not serve the daily needs of the community. While the applicant and its asset managers have not considered the current trash that litters the community due to its presence, a gas station would not help this situation.

Upon the review of the application, the applicant lacks to prove any benefits or reasoning to be granted this zoning exemption. Just because the adjacent lot is zoned for a gas station, should not be enough reason to allow another one on the busy South Dakota corridor. Another gas station would not serve the surrounding community or neighborhood. The light pollution that already comes from the "Sunoco" on the adjacent lot is enough, adding another gas station and its canopy could have environmental impacts. The applicant seems to downplay the proposed changes, but with more activity and eventual requests to extend hours of the store and gas station- will only lead to more problems for the community.

The trash the applicant allows to accumulate surrounding its plot would not seem to change if this application of the exemption is approved. It would not improve the area, bring services that are unavailable already, or serve the community any different than it already does. The traffic this change could bring and cause has not even been considered or studied.

The already busy corridor, with 6 other gas stations within its radius, would definitely hinder the flow of traffic that is already a cause for concern in the neighborhood. Given that Emerson Street NE, which is the applicant's proposed entrance for traffic flow, has already needed to have traffic calming devices installed on the street within this past year- should be reason enough to not grant this exemption.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17963A
EXHIBIT NO. 24

Furthermore, the applicant claims that landscaping won't change, however according to the plans, a small planter area with grass seems to disappear within the drawings to allow for the canopy and gas pumps. Given the grade of the street and the plot, it seems that runoff would also run chemicals into the street and surrounding neighborhood. Due to such grade of the street and lot, the stormwater runoff comes down EmersonSt from South Dakota NE, almost guaranteeing that if any spills were to happen - it would affect the community and its backyards. Backyards that are used for gardening, used for recreation, and playgrounds, all that could be affected for generations to come. Repeated high exposure to gasoline, whether in liquid or vapor form, can cause lung, brain and kidney damage, according to the NIH's National Library of Medicine.

This modification is of such significance, as described by the Zoning Board itself would affect the community negatively. The construction alone could disturb the wildlife I frequently enjoy seeing in the area, with the lot behind the applicant's previously being used as a community garden. The lot behind includes a big green space that is so rare in the city and is a great buffer for the neighbors in the area. The construction of a new building would not only disturb local wildlife, but would disturb the line of sight of many neighbors behind the applicant. A new building and canopy would potentially prevent sun and fresh air flow that is commonly breezing through the alley which abuts the community and the lots on South Dakota. The plans also include a new transformer, which the applicant already has and provides enough noise pollution to disallow neighbors to keep windows open at night. The proposed plans also allow more light pollution to disrupt neighbors and wildlife.

Increased crime is another consideration, as U.S gas stations are the site of approximately 63,530 violent crimes per year according to a survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Gas stations seem to be a magnet for crime and adding another one would not be helpful. Crimes committed against gas station customers have steadily increased over the past five years. Armed robbery increased significantly in 2021, and 2022 has seen a sharp rise in carjackings according to the Philadelphia Police Department. Further details are exemplified in an article by a non-profit investigating gun violence here: <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/11/philadelphia-gas-station-gun-violence/>

With the current plans, lines of sight and shadow production could prevent not only the neighbors ability for sunshine and outdoor enjoyment, it could prevent the aforementioned greenspace directly behind the applicant to die and struggle to keep its current living ecosystem where birds, possums, and other animals have nested and come to rely on. The increased activity alone could do this as well.

I fervently urge the Zoning Board to not approve of this exemption of allowing a gas station at 4975 South Dakota Ave NE. In short, it would provide no real benefit for the neighborhood. I believe that this development would have a negative impact on property value, quality of life, and the safety of my family and neighbors.

Thank you in advance for keeping my community safe and enjoyable.

Respectfully,

Roger W. Reavis
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